

BREW'D: Building Researchers to Empower Workforce Diversity – A Training Workshop

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1. Background

Diversity in the cancer research workforce leads to improved health outcomes, innovation, inclusion, and cultural sensitivity. Diversity in the clinical trials workforce leads to improved recruitment of diverse participants. BREW'D (Building Researchers to Empower Workforce Diversity) is a training module for hiring, retaining, and empowering diverse research teams. It is geared towards investigators and leaders to equip them with strategies to hire, empower, retain, and motivate diverse research teams. In our experience, building and empowering a diverse research team is accomplished by building a supportive and encouraging pathway for the variety of careers in the cancer research and clinical trials workforce; developing and refining retention strategies; and building a culture of empowerment. 'BREW'D' refers to the idea of coffee brewing - and thus relationships brewing - at the heart of diverse and empowered team building.

2. Goals

Our short-term goal is to train a plurality of directors and managers to increase the diversity of the clinical research workforce as measured by institutional analytics. Our long-term goal is to cultivate diverse representation as the highest level and across the cancer research workforce to improve health outcomes and meet the needs of our increasingly diverse catchment area, including the recruitment of diverse clinical trial participants.

3. Solutions and Methods

This training was developed by two principal investigators of one of the most diverse and prolific teams at The University of Kansas Cancer Center (KUCC). Using PowerPoint and the interactive polling software, Poll Everywhere, we have disseminated this hourlong training to upper-level management in the Clinical Trials Office (CTO) at KUCC and to community health workers. Participants complete a REDCap survey to enable us to understand the demographics of participants.

4. Outcomes

This training encourages participants to think critically about their recruitment, training, and retaining processes. The training has five components: 1) start with the right beans – know your “why” and communicate it to your team; 2) fair trade – understand the structural forces at play when recruiting a diverse team; 3) take the temperature – embrace the fluidity of team-building to develop retention strategies; 4) mix it up – model good practices of rest, passion, and excellence; 5) brew your cup – cultivate a culture of empowerment and shared decision-making; 6) create an environment of love and beauty – support the personal and professional development of staff.

5. Lessons Learned and Future Directions

In our training, we emphasize the importance of diversifying research staff as an important and effective long-term strategy to recruit diverse participants and improve outcomes in research and care delivery. Participants are interested in strategies to recruit, train, and retain diverse team members. Participants also report that diversity is an important component of successful clinical research teams, and they seek

concrete tools to empower and motivate their teams (Figure 1). We plan to distribute the training to research teams across the consortium.

Figure

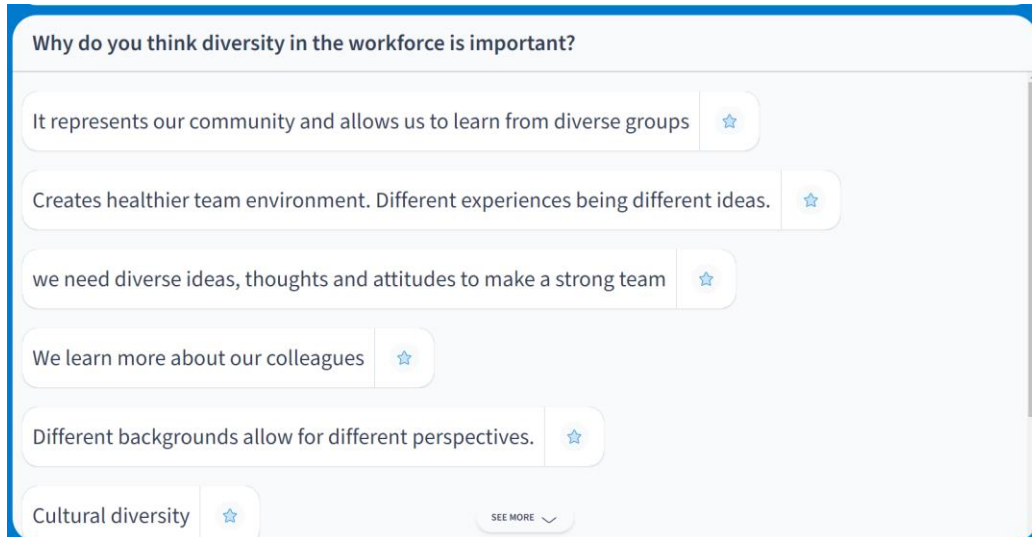


Figure 1. Interactive Poll Results.